



City of Seattle
Mike McGinn, Mayor

NEWS RELEASE

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City proposes local, federally-owned facilities for NOAA

SEATTLE – Seattle’s elected leadership, with support from the maritime industry and neighborhood leaders, has forwarded a proposal to the Department of Commerce to retain NOAA’s Marine Operations Center-Pacific in Seattle. In a letter sent today to U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke and Under Secretary Jane Lubchenco, Mayor Mike McGinn and the Seattle City Council argued that consolidating NOAA’s operations in Seattle at existing federal facilities is the best option for NOAA to achieve its mission and the best deal for federal taxpayers.

“The Department of Commerce should carefully consider this proposal,” Mayor McGinn said. “Our local maritime industry, elected officials and neighborhood leaders have all worked together, forwarding a new solution that could keep a great organization and valuable jobs in Seattle.”

The proposal is the latest effort of a years-long program, led by the city, to retain the marine center in Seattle, where it has made its home for more than 50 years. In August, NOAA announced its decision to move from Seattle, awarding a 20-year lease to the Port of Newport, Ore. That decision was appealed to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and sustained because NOAA violated its own solicitation rules by proposing a facility in a floodplain.

“Our proposal gives NOAA the chance to build on its rich history with Seattle, and it further realizes the vision of Senator Warren Magnuson to establish a true NOAA regional center at Sandpoint. This not only a good opportunity for Seattle, it’s good for the region,” said Councilmember Jean Godden.

The City of Seattle proposal requests that the Department of Commerce and NOAA include the Western Regional Center at Sand Point and Federal Center South in their evaluation of potential sites that are not located in a floodplain. The city's proposal meets GAO's guidance and would save tens of millions of taxpayer dollars.

"The Laurelhurst Community Club has worked for over two years to keep NOAA's marine operations in Seattle," said Jeannie Hale, president of the Laurelhurst Community Club. "NOAA has been a good neighbor. NOAA benefits from Seattle's thriving maritime community, access to research partners, and an exceptional quality of life for its employees. No other location can compete with all Seattle has to offer. We appreciate the work of the Mayor and City Council to make this happen."

Retaining the marine center in Seattle would preserve approximately 1,200 well paid direct and indirect jobs and \$180 million in economic activity in the area.

"Our company employs many skilled tradesmen, members of the International Association of Machinist Local 160. We support any effort to keep NOAA in Seattle. If they leave, it would have a devastating impact on our employees and their families," said Jason Walker, owner of Federal Marine and Defense Services in Seattle and Tacoma.

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